

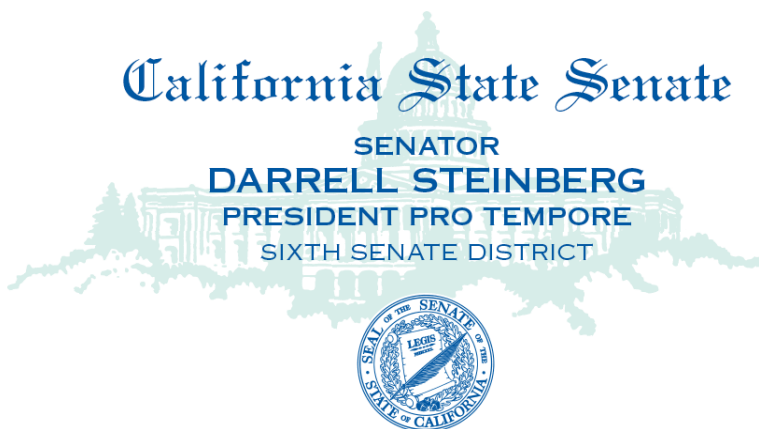
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SB 585 (Steinberg and Correa) Mental Health Services Act & Laura's Law

Purpose

SB 585 clarifies that funds generated under Proposition 63 of 2004—the Mental Health Services Act—can be expended to provide mental health treatment services provided under the Assisted Outpatient Treatment Demonstration Act of 2002 (known as Laura's Law).

Background

Approved by voters through Proposition 63 of 2004, the Mental Health Services Act provides over \$1 billion annually for local mental health services, including prevention and early intervention, innovative projects, Full Service Partnerships, peer support services, housing, and other mental health treatment services. This investment is devoted to reducing the long-term adverse impact of untreated mental health disorders, and supports progress towards statewide goals of serving children, transition age youth, adults, older adults and families with a spectrum of mental health needs.

A recent comprehensive evaluation of the Full Service Partnerships by the University of California at Los Angeles Center for Healthier Children, Youth and Families (http://mhsoac.ca.gov/Meetings/docs/Meetings/2012/Nov/OAC_111512_Tab4_MHSA_CostOffset_Report_FSP.pdf) recognized both the efficacy of the innovative service model for individuals receiving assistance, as well as the cost savings and cost avoidance that society realizes because mental health treatment services have been provided.

The Mental Health Services Act has served as a catalyst for transforming California's mental health system by emphasizing the philosophy, principles and practices of recovery for mental health clients, including personal empowerment, self-responsibility and self-determination.

Laura's Law, enacted in 2002 as a demonstration program, regulates designated assisted outpatient treatment services which counties may choose to provide. In counties that elect to implement Laura's Law, a court may order a person to obtain assisted outpatient treatment if the court finds the requisite criteria is met as specified. The sunset date for this demonstration program is January 1, 2017.

This Bill

SB 585 reflects a fine tuning of the Mental Health Services Act and Laura's Law as follows:

- Clarifies that Mental Health Services Act revenues distributed by the State Controller to counties pursuant to the Act can be expended for mental health treatment services provided under Laura's Law.
- Maintains the integrity of the voter approved Mental Health Services Act by requiring a county to include Laura's Law in their annual Mental Health Services Act plan or plan update pursuant to Section 5847 of Welfare and Institutions Code if a county elects to implement Laura's Law and use Mental Health Service's Act Funds for implementation.
- Specifies that counties may also use funds distributed to them through various County Realignment accounts, including the Mental Health Subaccount, Mental Health Equity Subaccount, Vehicle License Collection Account of the Local Revenue Fund, Mental Health Account, and Behavioral Health Subaccount, for mental health treatment services provided under Laura's Law.
- Articulates that clients should be fully informed and volunteer for all treatment provided unless the client is a danger to self or others or grave disability requires temporary involuntary treatment, or the client is under a court order for Laura's Law and prior to the filing of the petition for Laura's Law has been offered voluntary treatment.
- Facilitates the receipt of treatment for the few individuals who may need assistance through Laura's Law and ensures that a full continuum of needs for client recovery and wellness is supported.
- Respects the integrity of local decision making by continuing the requirement for County Board of Supervisors to elect to participate in the Laura's Law demonstration and to approve their county's Mental Health Service's Act plans for implementation.

SB 585 will serve to mitigate potential misconceptions that only certain funding sources can or cannot be used for implementation of Laura's Law in counties that elect to implement the demonstration program. Further, it maintains the integrity of the Mental Health Services Act and local decision making.

Support

- California Council of Community Mental Health Agencies
- California Mental Health Director's Association

For More Information

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